

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9-11 remain pending in this application.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 have been indicated to be allowable.

Claims 9 and 10, and therefore dependent claim 11, have been amended to more clearly point out what applicants regard as their invention by reciting that the fine fibers have a crystallinity from "17.8% or more to 34.3%." Support for this amendment can be found in Table 7 of the present specification (page 43) - the lower limit of 17.8% is shown as example 19 and the upper limit is shown as example 20. This range is a primary reason given in the Office Action for the allowance of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, so the Office has already considered this range. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

Claims 9-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Perkins et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,178,932) in view of McAlister (U.S. Patent No. 3,494,819) and Bessey et al., "Solid Phase Processing of Polymers" and Fourne, "Synthetic Fibers." Applicants have effectively amended each of claims 9-11 to point out that fine fibers having a crystallinity from "17.8% or more to 34.3%" are used in the melt blowing step. As recognized by the Examiner in allowing claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7, there is nothing in the prior art that discloses or renders obvious the claimed range. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Prompt and favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested, along with the timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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